

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 and 7-12. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

1. (currently amended) A broadband telephony system, comprising:

a plurality of remote endpoint devices coupled to a broadband data network;

a plurality of remote PSTNs coupled between the plurality of remote endpoint devices and a plurality of remote audio interfaces, each of the audio interfaces including a transducer to communicate audible signals with a user, each remote endpoint device being coupled to one remote PSTN, each remote PSTN being coupled to more than one remote endpoint device, each remote PSTN being coupled to at least one remote audio interface, and each remote audio interface being coupled to one remote PSTN;

an originating endpoint device coupled between the broadband data network and a local audio interface adapted to communicate an audio signal, the originating endpoint device adapted to select a destination audio interface for delivery of the audio signal, the destination audio interface being one of the plurality of remote audio interfaces; and

a database arrangement adapted to determine a preferred path for the audio signal from the originating endpoint device to the destination audio interface by correlating each remote audio interface with one of the plurality of remote PSTNs, and correlating each of the plurality of remote endpoint devices with one of the plurality of remote PSTNs, the database arrangement being separately situated from the originating endpoint device.

2. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim 1, wherein the preferred path includes a destination endpoint device wherein the destination endpoint device is one of the plurality of remote endpoint devices being correlated to a destination PSTN, the destination PSTN being one of the plurality of remote PSTNs being uniquely correlated to the destination audio interface, each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the PSTNs.

3. (previously presented) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, wherein the path is a cost- preferred-path.
4. (previously presented) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, wherein the path includes a pre-defined path portion.
5. (original) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, further comprising a local PSTN coupled between the originating endpoint device and the local audio interface, wherein the local audio interface is adapted to designate an identifier associated with a destination audio interface and communicate the identifier to the originating endpoint device through the local PSTN, and the originating endpoint device is adapted to select the destination audio interface responsive to the identifier designated by the local audio interface.
6. (original) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, wherein the destination audio interface is coupled to the destination endpoint device.
7. (currently amended) For use in an environment including a plurality of packet-based telephony endpoint devices, a packet-based telephony system for establishing audio communications between two parties via the plurality of packet-communicating telephony endpoint devices, a plurality of PSTN communication devices and a plurality of PSTNs, the system comprising:
 - a first endpoint device and a second endpoint device each having,
 - a packet-based interface for establishing packet-based communications
 - between the first and second endpoint devices, and
 - an audio arrangement capable of producing and receiving sound for
 - communications;
 - the second endpoint device having a PSTN interface for establishing a connection
 - between the second endpoint device and a remote PSTN communication device, the remote
 - PSTN communication device having an audio arrangement capable of producing and
 - receiving sound for communications; and

the first endpoint device and the second endpoint device effecting communications between two parties by using

the packet-based interfaces of the first endpoint device and the second endpoint device to establish packet-based communications therebetween, and

the PSTN interface of the second endpoint device to establish audio communications between the first endpoint device and the remote PSTN communication device using the audio arrangements of the remote PSTN communications device and the first endpoint device and in response to receiving a PSTN identifier corresponding to the remote PSTN communication device.

~~A broadband telephony system, comprising:~~

- ~~—— a plurality of remote endpoint devices coupled to a broadband data network;~~
- ~~a plurality of remote PSTNs coupled to the plurality of remote endpoint devices, each remote endpoint device being coupled to one remote PSTN, each PSTN being coupled to more than one remote endpoint device, each remote endpoint device being coupled to one of a plurality of remote audio interfaces;~~
- ~~—— an originating endpoint device coupled between the broadband data network and a local audio interface adapted to communicate an audio signal, the originating endpoint device adapted to select a destination audio interface for delivery of the audio signal, the destination audio interface being one of the plurality of remote audio interfaces; and~~
- ~~a database arrangement adapted to determine a preferred path for the audio signal from the originating endpoint device to the destination audio interface, the database arrangement being separately situated from the originating endpoint device.~~

8. (currently amended) The packet-based telephony ~~broadband telephony~~ system of claim 7, further comprising a database arrangement adapted to determine a preferred path for the audio communications ~~signal~~ from the first ~~originating~~ endpoint device to the destination audio interface ~~remote PSTN communication device~~, the database arrangement being separately situated from the first ~~originating~~ endpoint device and wherein the database is adapted to uniquely correlate each PSTN communication device ~~remote audio interface~~ with one of the plurality of remote packet-communicating telephony ~~remote packet-communicating telephony~~ endpoint devices, and the

preferred path includes a destination endpoint device wherein the destination endpoint device is one of the plurality of ~~remote packet-communicating telephony~~ endpoint devices being correlated to the ~~destination audio interface, PSTN communication device.~~ each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the PSTNs.

9. (currently amended) The packet-based telephony ~~broadband telephony~~ system of claim 8 [[7]], wherein the ~~optimized preferred~~ path is a cost-preferred path, ~~each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the~~ PSTNs.

10. (currently amended) The packet-based telephony ~~broadband telephony~~ system of claim 8 [[7]], wherein the ~~preferred optimized~~ path includes a pre-defined path portion, each of the PSTN communication devices ~~audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating first endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the~~ PSTNs.

11. (currently amended) The packet-based telephony ~~broadband telephony~~ system of claim 8, further comprising a local PSTN coupled between the ~~originating first~~ endpoint device and a local PSTN device ~~the local audio interface~~, wherein the local PSTN device ~~audio interface~~ is adapted to designate an identifier associated with [[a]] the destination audio interface and communicate the identifier to the ~~originating first~~ endpoint device through the local PSTN, and the ~~originating first~~ endpoint device is adapted to select the destination audio interface responsive to the identifier designated by the local PSTN device ~~audio interface~~.

12. (currently amended) A method of sharing resources of a broadband telephony system using an originating endpoint device coupled between a broadband data network and a local audio interface adapted to communicate an audio signal, the originating endpoint device adapted to select a destination audio interface for delivery of the audio signal, the destination audio interface being one of a plurality of remote audio interfaces, the method comprising:

registering with a registrar database arrangement information from a plurality of user-provided gateways, each gateway coupled to the broadband data network and one of a plurality of regional telephone networks, and each of the plurality of regional telephone networks coupled to more than one gateway;

storing in the registrar database arrangement correlation information associating each of a plurality of audio interfaces and each gateway with one of the plurality of regional telephone networks;

exchanging with a plurality of other users, use of one user-provided gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway for access to the registrar database arrangement and use of other user-provided gateways as remote terminating gateways; and

at the originating endpoint device, communicating audible signals with a user ~~processing unencoded analog signals~~ and communicating representative audio signals with the broadband data network independent of any of the regional telephone networks.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

selecting a destination audio interface;

routing a request from an originating gateway to the registrar database for access to the destination audio interface; and

determining a preferred network path from the originating gateway to the destination audio interface, the preferred network path including a destination gateway, the destination gateway being one of the plurality of user-provided gateways associated with the regional telephone network associated with the destination audio interface.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

restricting use to the plurality of other users, of a user's gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway to a pre-determined maximum elapsed time within a periodic interval.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

restricting use to the plurality of other users, of a user's gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway to a pre-determined maximum number of calls.

16. (previously presented) A method of sharing resources of a broadband telephony system, the method comprising:

registering with a registrar database information from a plurality of user-provided gateways, each gateway coupled to a broadband data network and one of a plurality of regional telephone networks, and each of the plurality of regional telephone networks coupled to more than one gateway;

storing in the registrar database correlation information associating each of a plurality of audio interfaces and each gateway with one of the plurality of regional telephone networks;

exchanging with a plurality of other users, use of one user-provided gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway for access to the registrar database and use of other user-provided gateways as remote terminating gateways; and

restricting use to the plurality of other users, of a user's gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway to a pre-determined maximum elapsed time differential between a duration of calls originated by the user's gateway and a duration of calls terminated by the user's gateway.

17. (previously presented) A method of sharing resources of a broadband telephony system, the method comprising:

registering with a registrar database information from a plurality of user-provided gateways, each gateway coupled to a broadband data network and one of a plurality of

regional telephone networks, and each of the plurality of regional telephone networks coupled to more than one gateway;

storing in the registrar database correlation information associating each of a plurality of audio interfaces and each gateway with one of the plurality of regional telephone networks;

exchanging with a plurality of other users, use of one user-provided gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway for access to the registrar database and use of other user-provided gateways as remote terminating gateways; and

restricting use of a user's gateway as a call-originating gateway to a pre-determined maximum elapsed time differential between a duration of calls originated by the user's gateway and a duration of calls terminated by the user's gateway.